

NATIONAL STW OPPORTUNITIES

A REPORT OF THE NATIONAL STW LEARNING CENTER

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The School-to-Work Internet Gateway

Operated by the Learning Center, the School-to-Work (STW) website (<http://www.stw.ed.gov/>) is filled with information for individuals interested in the wide world of school-to-work. Continuous development of the site has made it even easier to find what you want quickly and easily. At the School-to-Work Learning Center, we know that when you want information, you want it now! We pride ourselves on

being customer-oriented and user friendly.

The homepage provides easy access to all of the site's various sections. Look at these great features!

★ STW Bulletin Board – a free discussion area to share and exchange views.

★ Initiatives, by State – pages devoted to summaries of activities, grant information, points of contact, and links to states' own Internet sites. The Learning Center is currently working with states to expand

their pages by including more resources and materials, and providing an opportunity to publicize their activities to the greater STW community.

★ Technical Assistance

Providers – a list of over 190 organizations and individuals ready to help with development, implementation, and system building.

★ Calendars – lists events of interest to the general public and to STW grantees.

Our website also features free resources. Our Resource

Library is filled with hundreds of materials and documents on various STW subjects, including:

- ★ career clusters;
- ★ employers;
- ★ integrated curriculum;
- ★ out-of-school youth; and
- ★ student assessment.

And the STW website is regularly updated – as soon as we have new information, we get it to you. Visit <http://www.stw.ed.gov/> today!!

Tools At Your Fingertips

A unique aspect to the STW Internet Gateway is the database of *Practical Tools* — action materials designed to assist with the implementation of STW at the state and local levels. Examples of tools include: articulation and employer agreements, student and teacher handbooks, detailed descriptions of activities, and strategic planning documents. What website visitors like best is the ability to download most of the tools directly from our website and to adapt them to local STW systems and individual schools.

The more than 480 Practical Tools are easily searched, either by subject area (there are 30), or by keyword.

The search engine provides a list of topics from which to choose specific tools. Each document includes title, author, contact information, an abstract, and either a link to the tool on the World Wide Web or a downloadable file.

Let's look at an example. Suppose you're interested in developing an arts-related curriculum or you'd like to know what an arts curriculum integrated with STW activities would look like. At the Practical Tools search page (<http://www.stw.ed.gov/database/tools.cfm>), you might first choose "integrated curriculum" as a subject area. This search rewards you with a list of 41 documents. Scrolling down the list, you'd see "J. Paul Getty Trust ArtsEdNet

Classroom Resources," which sounds interesting. The description tells you that this tool provides lesson plans and curriculum ideas. You click on the link and you're ready to go. Easy, right? Now suppose you didn't think of the term "integrated curriculum," and instead you chose to search using the keyword "arts." In that case, you'd receive a list of 13 documents, including "J. Paul Getty Trust ArtsEdNet Classroom Resources."

We also provide instructions and tips for downloading materials from the Internet. So remember, when looking for materials to help with your STW initiatives: **Don't fret, get on the NET!**

The School-to-Work (STW) Learning Center, funded through the National School-to-Work Opportunities Act, is part of a new Federal approach to working in partnership with STW grantees. Intricately linked to the National School-to-Work Office, the Center is both one of its strategic means for delivering technical assistance to grantees and its vehicle for disseminating information to the public.

For more information, contact:
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What Our Visitors Have to Say:

"I like the resource bulletins - you can download them and modify, and use them for local purposes."

"I look at everything."

"We set up our whole communication network based on the Internet."

"Every time I leave the state to go to a conference, it costs \$1,500. The website is the cheapest airplane ticket I have."

Getting Around

The first page of the STW Internet Gateway (the homepage) permits both browsing and a detailed search. "Hot Topics" lists four or five new items that may be of particular interest to our visitors. We also have a "What's New" page listing all of the new additions to the site. And don't miss the "Top 5 Files" -- see what everyone else is downloading.

The primary and largest sections of the site include the

Products and Resource Library (search among 1,115 informational pieces), communications information (featuring "Hot News"), points of contact for grant and state program implementation, STW research and evaluation documents, Events Calendars, and a list of technical assistance providers. And, of course, links to other Internet sites are essential. If you're in a hurry, check the "Express Menu" which allows for quick and

constant movement from page to page of the site. At the bottom of each page is a link back to the homepage. We aim never to leave you stranded in cyberspace.

Being customer-oriented and user-focused, we always want to know what you think of our site. Answer our "10 Easy Questions" (located on the homepage) and provide any feedback you have about the site.

STW Website Supports Job Shadow Day!

Groundhog Job Shadow Day was a big hit for the country and for the STW website. The STW website received a record number of visitors looking for Practical Tools about job shadowing and involving students in the workplace. These individuals were no doubt preparing for February 2, 1998, when more than 125,000 students had the opportunity to "job shadow" employees in over 5000 businesses around the country. Job shadowing allows young people a chance to learn by doing and to see how the skills they learn in school can be put into action in the workplace. Here are some activities employers and young people participated in on Job Shadow Day:

★ In New York, meteorologists from "CBS Morning News" and "Good Morning America" worked with budding

journalists, who were included in their morning broadcasts.

★ In Washington, DC eight Cabinet Secretaries brought their "shadows" to the White House to participate in a budget meeting.

★ Every state in the union participated in Job Shadow Day, and in Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Utah, Florida, Rhode Island, and Washington, the Governors and hundreds of mayors, state legislators and private businesses gave kids a glimpse into their daily routines.

★ In the private sector, Microsoft, Bell South, Boeing, Kraft Foods, Marriott, and Fleet Bank were just a few of the businesses that opened their doors to young "shadows" around the country.

"[Job Shadow Day] is an excellent opportunity for students across America to get excited about real-world jobs

of the Information Technology industry," said Bill Gates, Microsoft Chairman and CEO. Even former President George Bush was a mentor for a day, showing a local student the finer points of presidential diplomacy. "The number of volunteers who have come on board confirms that Groundhog Job Shadow Day is a great public-private partnership, and our goal is to channel this momentum into an annual event that reaches more kids with each passing year," said JD Hoyer, former director of the National School-to-Work Office.



Easy Answers to Easy Questions

The STW website features, "10 Easy Questions," a customer survey. We have compiled the first batch of results and are working to address questions raised.

For example, we are collecting sample employer agreements and business contracts, as well as model teaching methods.

Although we have many resources regarding integrated curricula, we have received specific requests for more teacher instructional guides and materials.

We are also examining the possibility of adding a search engine for the entire site, not only for the Resource Library. An overall search feature would permit individuals to find specific items quickly and easily.

If you haven't yet filled out a survey, it's not too late. Visit the website and give us your thoughts and ideas for improvement. We want the STW website to answer your questions and address your needs. Let us know how we can help.